



ST. AUGUSTINE—SEA-WALL.

The Elysian State.

FLORIDA is not so called because of its floweriness: Ponce de Leon gave to its name because the day on which he made the land was the day called in his calendar Pascua Florida, or Palm Sunday. He was a comrade of Columbus, and set forth from Porto Rico in 1512, to find a certain island called Bimini, where was said to be a fountain of youth. The old man missed it and lit upon Florida. After two

tance from the nineteenth century to the sixteenth. Nothing can be more appropriate than their names, for the former strikes you with all the vim of Andrew Jackson, after whom it is called, while about the latter there is a flavor of age which seems to breathe from out the ancient name of the good old father whom the Spanish governor selected for its patron saint. The United States government has, at considerable expense, built here a sea-wall, little thinking of the romantic use it would be put to



PALMETTO AVENUE, ON FORT GEORGE ISLAND.

months of worry with fierce natives he went back not a day younger than when he came. Then for three hundred years Florida was the field of contention, battles, defeats, victories, bloodshed and massacre. After so many years of killing it now gives back health and life to the sick and dying. After its years of ceaseless wrangles, strife, and wars, it gives rest and peace and salutary influences. After fertilizing its soil with blood it yields rich harvests of oranges, bananas, figs, and grapes. The consumptive goes there for new lungs, the asthmatic for breath, the nervous for quietude, the

in after-years. It is just wide enough for two to walk side by side, and is a delightful and much frequented promenade for lovers, and also an inviting place of an April day for one to lie on one's back and dream and philosophize on the subtle amalgamation going on between water, sky, and foliage.

This Spanish-built town of narrow, quaint old streets, has a resident population of about two thousand, which is increased during the winter to from six to ten thousand by visitors. Most consumptives, however, find the air of St. Augustine "too strong" in midwin-

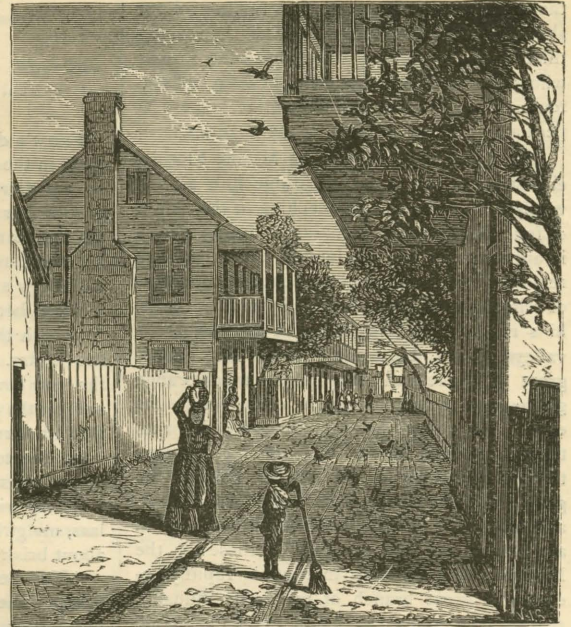
ter, but enjoy its climate greatly in April and May. The mean temperature, calculated upon twenty years' readings of the thermometer, is—for spring, 68.54 degrees Fahrenheit; for summer, 80.27 degrees; for autumn, 71.73

degrees; for winter, 58.08 degrees. This would seem authoritatively to show a charming temperature, and so it is except when the northeast wind blows in the winter. This is the wind that makes everybody grumble at his coffee of a morning, call for his hotel bill and howl at humanity in general, or, if the house has the modern convenience of a "growlery" in it, he may shut

himself in and have the questionable satisfaction of quarrelling with himself till the wind turns. But it is not so severe intrinsically. The thermometer shows only about fifty-five or sixty, whereas there is every reason for expecting it to stand at least ten degrees below zero. The truth is there is a sense of imposition about this wind which poisons its edge; we feel that we have rights, that this is Florida, and that there is a malicious, persecuting air in this blow. Let, however, but a mere

twitch of the compass happen—let but the east wind blow—and straightway the world is amiable again. For the east wind, of such bad repute in the rest of the world, in Florida makes amends for all its brethren. It is bland as a baby's breath, a sweet and saintly wind that is more soothing than a calm could be, and makes this quaint, romantic, straggling, sleepy old city of St. Augustine paradisaical.

Jacksonville not only belongs to the nineteenth century but practically to the last ten years of it. It has all the signs of a prosperous commercial city, and in midwinter offers to the northern visitor a pleasant surprise which, com-



ST. GEORGE STREET, ST. AUGUSTINE.

a wide balcony, where many people are promenading in the pleasant evening air. Farther back in the town, a few hundred yards, situated among fine oaks, is the St. James Hotel, where, as we peep through the drawingroom windows, on the way to our room, we find so many New York, Boston, and Chicago faces that we do not feel so very far from home after all. The minor hostilities of various sorts are said to amount to one hundred in number.

Splendid young water-oaks border the streets, sometimes completely arching them over. These streets contrast greatly with the great forest pines, amid which Jacksonville is situated. Just here let me say a singular phenom-



ON THE ST. JOHN'S.

ing after the railway journey through the pines, is almost like a romantic adventure after a long stretch of quiet life. The train comes to a stop on the wharf; as we step from the cars we hear a pleasant plash among the lily-pads underneath the platform, and lifting the eyes at this suggestion perceive the great placid expanses of the St. John's stretching far away to the south and east. A few yards from the station the long façade of the "Grand National Hotel" elevates itself; wherefrom, if the traveller's *entrée* be at night, he is likely to hear sounds of music coming through brilliant lighted windows opening upon

enon is taking place all along this belt of pines which now borders these southern states. The yellow pine does not reproduce itself except under very rare conditions; when the forests are cut away for timber there springs up in its place a forest of young oaks. This circumstance has baffled the scientific knowledge of our time. The civilization of the pines is that of the timber-cutter and the turpentine-distiller; to-day they set their shanties and "stills," quickly cut down the trees, and to-morrow they are gone, leaving a desolate and lonesome land. But presently the young oaks begin to clothe



ST. JAMES HOTEL, JACKSONVILLE.

rheumatic for joint lubrication, the air-poisoned for a perfect climate, and the tired and over-worked for rest and unbroken repose.

Florida is not remarkable for beauty of landscape, and persons, especially those from hill countries, who go there for this sole end, will be disappointed, for, with the exception of the beautiful Tallahassee region, the land is either level or very gently rolling.

Jacksonville and St. Augustine, the two principal cities are less than fifty miles apart; but the difference between them is just the dis-



A LANDING ON THE OCKLAWAHA.

the nakedness of the earth, their thicker foliage shades it more than the pine, their leaves fertilize it more richly; then comes the farmer who substitutes the civilization of corn and cotton for that of timber and turpentine, and erects permanent homes in place of the shanties.

The Tallahassee country, or Middle Florida, embraces as fair a set of arable hills as one would wish to see, some reaching to the height of four hundred feet, a country differing wholly in appearance from the lumber and turpentine regions about Jacksonville. Generous breadths of chocolate-colored fields, spreading oaks, hills rounded and swelled with fatness, green valleys, lakes blossoming with water-lilies, great glossy-leaved magnolias, mock-orange groves, and ample prospects, come before the eye. This country has been long noted for its tobacco-growing lands. But the soil appears to have capacities for all things. Besides the great staples of cotton, corn, sugar-cane, wheat, and tobacco, it produces market vegetables in abundance, and the growing of these for the Northern and Western markets is rapidly becoming a great branch of profitable industry. A train from along the line of the Jacksonville and Mobile Railway through to Chicago without break has been recently inaugurated in the interest of those growing early vegetables and melons. These lands can be bought cleared for from five to thirty dollars an acre. The city of Tallahassee, the seat of government, is only twenty miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and consequently shares the bland air of that water. It has a national repute for a generous hospitality, the logic whereof is that enough for ten is certainly enough for eleven; and so on, *ad infinitum*. This reasoning has such a mysterious virtue that it has repeated the miracle of the loaves and fishes many times among these good-hearted people.

Of the rivers of Florida the St. John's and Indian are the most noted. The former in some places reaches a breadth of six miles and is rarely less than one in width. The Indians called it the Welaka, "chain of lakes." When the Frenchmen came they called it the River May, and the Spaniards the San Mateo River. It runs through exceedingly fertile lands. Orange groves and settlements have sprung up on either of its level shores all along its course. The Indian River is separated from the ocean by a narrow strip of land from a half mile to two miles in width. Upon this land, which is very rich, oranges, sugar-cane, bananas, pineapples, grapes, indigo, sweet potatoes, and all manner of garden vegetables are said to yield profusely. The air along this Indian River country is wonderfully bland, the waters are full of fish in great variety; the woods abound in game, and the whole region is a standing invitation to the invalid to come down with yacht and tent, with rod and gun, and rebuild brain, muscle, and nerve. The Ocklawaha, which flows into the St. John's, is called "the sweetest water-lane in the world," a lane which runs for more than a hundred and fifty miles of pure delight betwixt hedgerows of oaks, and cypresses, and palms, and magnolias, and mosses, and manifold vinegrowths, a lane clean to travel along, for there is never a speck of dust in it save the blue dust and gold dust which the wind blows out of the flags and lilies. An odd-looking steamboat, that seems to puff steam in leisurely whiffs or to exhale it as its natural breath rather than for any power of locomotion, glides along its placid surface, and the tired passenger puts himself in an easy position, repulses all advances to conversation, and receives such blessed revelations of rest and tranquillity that his heart shall for ever afterwards interpret Ocklawaha to mean Elysian peace.

The Spaniards believed Florida to be full of gold and pearls, and the fruit-grower finds the gold in the fertility of the soil. Ponce de Leon thought it held the fountain of youth, and the invalid breathes the air and is well, the tired and overworked lie down and find such rest that they rise up feeling as new as Adam, and the wrinkled and flaccid eat to fulness of the orange and are satisfied. So the old fancies only change their forms to become veritable truths. Strange as it may sound, Florida seems to hold within its borders just what a person most needs, and might well be called our American Eden.

NOTE. We are indebted to J. B. Lippincott & Co. for our beautiful illustrations, and refer the reader to a book entitled "Florida," just published by them for more extended descriptions of the scenery, climate, and history of that country.

THE old city of Troy had but one gate. Go round and round and round the city, and you could find no other. If you wanted to get in, there was but one way, and no other.

So to the strong and beautiful city of heaven, there is but one gate and no other. Do you know what it is? Christ says, "I am the door."

The Storm of Life.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER IX.

AT ANCHOR.

FROM a dreamless sleep Rachel was roused, early in the morning before daybreak, by some person stirring about in the rooms below. She groped her way quietly down stairs, and found the old man kindling a fire, and getting ready his breakfast, before starting out into the dark and foggy streets.

"Up betimes, Rachel," he said cheerily, "up with the lark, ay! and before the lark in the winter. I've lost my head-man that did the very early jobs for me, or I only wait myself on the nobility and the gentry commonly. But St. Gregory's flues want cleaning, and I must see to 'em myself, for it's a particular job. I was coming from there last night when I fell in with you. Eh! but you're a handy lass, my girl. I like to see a body as can move about brisk and sharp."

"I've been a servant in two or three good places," she answered, "and I'm handy at any housework. I can wash, and iron, and bake, and clean with anybody; only I've no character. If you and her could trust me."

A sudden hope had broken upon her, that these kind folks, who had been so good to her and Rosy, might perhaps let her stay with them, at least for a time, as they were plainly in want of some one to do their housework, and mind the poor woman up stairs.

"Trust you," repeated Sylvanus; "ay, ay! my girl, I'll trust you. Only you keep in your mind as God sees you—ay, and loves you always, though he may n't be always showing it plain—and there'll be no fear of you going wrong. He is n't always nursing us, so to say, and kissing us, and making much of us, as you do with your little maid; and you'll have to leave that off soon, if she's to grow up a good serviceable woman. He sets us hard things to do, ay, and hard things to bear, till we're ready to cry out that he's a hard master; but all through it he's looking at us, and if you and me could only see his face, there'd be such a smile upon it when we were doing right, and such trouble if we were going wrong, that we could n't go wrong anyhow. Did n't he give up his dear Son to come and tell us all about himself? That was love. Ay! God is love."

"I never thought much of Him loving me," said Rachel softly.

"Well, well!" he answered, "that's how we ought to think of Him."

He was silent after that, being busy with his breakfast. It was ready in a few minutes, and he bade Rachel sit down with him at the little round table on which it was laid.

"My girl," he said, just before finishing, "maybe you might like to stay with us a bit. Well, do. It isn't a superior place, such as you're used to; but when you've earned a character, so to say, I might speak for you at some of the grand houses I go to. Bless you! there's scores of the gentry know me, Sylvanus Croft; thousands and thousands of chimneys I've climbed in London in old times, and seen the tops of 'em in all sorts of weather. There's no climbing boys about here now, thank God; though they tell me there are down in Liverpool, and in country-places. Eh! God sees some sad sights! But you think about it, my girl. Mother forgets how old Sylvie 'ud be, if she was alive now, but she'd be about your age, I guess, and a great comfort to me."

"I do n't want to think," cried Rachel earnestly, "I'd serve you and her on my hands and knees, if you'd only let me stay, and keep Rosy instead of wages. It should n't cost you much, I'd save so. And, oh! you'd teach us both to be good."

"Please God," said the old man, nodding; "talk it over with mother while I'm away. I'm agreeable, more than agreeable. The little lass 'ud be like a playfellow for me, and I'm beginning to be fond of play again, like a child, only I've had no playfellows. Well, I must be off now, or St. Gregory'll think I'm never coming to his flues."

Rachel could hardly believe that it was true, as she stole softly up stairs again to the attic, to see if Rosy was asleep. The little room seemed already to belong to her, to be her own home. The view from the window was charming to her, though it looked out only upon roofs and chimneys, and up to the open sky overhead. There was a small glass hanging against the wall, reflecting her wistful face, and rough, uncombed hair; but that should soon be smoothed again, she thought. Everything delighted her, and Rosy's face upon the pillow wore a look of peace and comfort, such as she had not seen upon it yet. Oh! if Rosy could only be safely sheltered and cared for. If they might but stay here with these good people, there would be days of play and gladness for her little child, even if she herself were bowed down and saddened by the memory of her sins.

To dress Rosy, even in her ragged clothing, and to take her down to the quiet and warm little kitchen, where breakfast was ready for her, was such a joy as Rachel had never felt before, and hardly dared to think of now, lest it should prove but a mocking dream. To see the child's gladness, as she warmed her little feet before the fire, was a delight. The cold and hunger they suffered only yesterday seemed already a long time since. There was only their torn and soiled clothing to remind them of it, and Rosy, like a child, had no thought about that. She laughed aloud once or twice, and Rachel stood and listened with a sob. Could it be indeed, that her merry little darling was coming back to her?

As the morning light strengthened she sat ready a breakfast-tray for the sick woman upstairs, as daintily and nicely as if it had been for Mrs. Curtis of the Hall. She earnestly desired to gain Mrs. Croft's favor. When she found that she was awake, she set the white, pleasant room in order, and waited upon her quietly and deftly, in a fashion that the paralytic woman had never seen before.

"You're a handy lass," she said, as Rachel was about to carry away the breakfast-tray, somewhat downcast at Mrs. Croft's silence.

"Yes," she answered eagerly; "and, oh! if you would try me, and trust me, I'd serve you on my hands and knees. Only let me stay! You know the worst of me; I have n't kept back a thing; and you did n't turn me out of doors last night. It 'ud be almost like being in heaven for a night, and then turned out again. I'd do better for you than any other maid could do."

She stood beside the bed trembling with anxiety, her eyes fastened upon the pale, worn face, and gray hair, and sunken eyes upon the pillow.

"Ay, stay," said Mrs. Croft, "my old man is always fretting about me when he's away, and he's taken a fancy to you and your little girl. Stay till we see how things go on. I'm very lonesome here at times, only for the thought of our dear Lord. He never leaves me, only I forget he's here, and fancy I'm all alone, till it's as if he laid his hand upon me, and there comes a whisper in my heart that He has n't gone away. Stop a minute, and I'll tell you how long I've been in this room."

She shut her eyes, as if to recall the long years, and count them as they went by, while Rachel stood looking down upon her, with tears standing in her eyes—tears that were more of gladness than sorrow.

"It's going on for eighteen years," she said; "Sylvie was a little bigger than your child, and I was proud of her, more than I can say; and I could n't bear to think her father was a chimney-sweep. I'd come of better folks, and I'd been laundry-maid in great houses; and how I came to wed with a sweep I could hardly tell. But I would never let Sylvie go out with her father; no nor never went out with him myself, for very shame of his trade. And nobody would believe Sylvie was a common child. It was a sore trouble to him, my pride and shame was, and I let him have no pleasure in Sylvie. Then she died quite sudden. I suppose I'd something like a stroke, but I was never right again; and he was so good to me, so good! He never said a word to blame me, though he were almost broken-hearted. Ever since then I've been lying here, till this place has come to be like the place where Jacob slept, and saw a ladder set up on the earth, reaching up to heaven, and angels ascending and descending upon it. I wake up sometimes, in the dead of the night, and say to myself, 'Surely the Lord is in this place.'"

"Are you scared?" asked Rachel. "Does n't it make you afraid?"

"At first, at first," she answered, "but not now. If I could get the feeling that God was gone away, that would scare me. Oh! it would be dreadful to be in this place without God! It's all my comfort and gladness. Sometimes I say to myself, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me;' and I feel in my very heart he is really thinking of me and my wants."

"If He would but think of me and Rosy!" sobbed Rachel.

"Eh, lass! but is n't he thinking?" cried Mrs. Croft. "Who sent Sylvanus in your way last night, when you were at the worst pinch of all? And who put it into our hearts to keep you, instead of letting you go again into the streets, and you'd have been thankful only to be let go? By-and-by you'll be glad to feel as if God was with you all the day long."

"Oh, if He would only forgive me and make me good!" sobbed Rachel again.

"He does forgive you and me," she went on. "There was that poor woman who was a sinner, and washed the feet of Jesus. The good folks wondered at him for letting her touch his feet, she was so wicked. But he let her wash them; ah! and kiss them over and over again, and anoint them with her precious ointment."

And then he said to her, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' Why should n't he forgive you? He came for the very purpose. Could he do more than he has done for us? There's a verse of a hymn Sylvie learnt once, I'll say it to you:

"What could your Redeemer do,
More than he hath done for you?
To procure your peace with God,
Could he more than shed his blood?
After all his waste of love,
All his drawings from above,
Why will you your Lord deny?
Why will you resolve to die?"

The solemn words fell slowly on Rachel's ear. She could not understand them altogether; but the words that smote her heart most keenly were, "After all His waste of love." Oh! if he had thrown away his love upon her all these years, while she had been sinning against him, what a wretch she was! She would love him back again with all her heart.

"I can't never wash his feet, like that poor woman," she said softly, "and I can't ever take Rosy to Him like those other women did their children, but maybe He'll let me show my love some other way."

CHAPTER X.

ROCKS AHEAD.

NEXT day Rachel was going about the house in an old print gown of many colors which had been lying by since Mrs. Croft had been paralyzed, and Rosy was dressed in some of Sylvie's clothes. Sylvanus was full of joy; he felt no suspicion of Rachel, and no dread of her turning out badly on his hands. Nothing was locked up in the house, and she had free access to every room. The place of a trusted and familiar friend was given to her at once, or rather that of a grown-up daughter. The second evening she was in the house she found the old man sitting by the kitchen fire with Rosy on his knee and her head resting peacefully on his shoulder.

"I'm learning her to call me grandad," he said, with a short, happy laugh, "grandad! Why, it might be Sylvie, grown up, and married below her, like mother, and come home again with her little girl! We've been talking about our poor eyes, and what's to be done, and how we'll go to a famous doctor I know quite well, a very clever doctor, and see what he can do for us. Rosy and grandad will go to-morrow."

There was nothing serious the matter with Rosy's sight. Now that she had good food and well-shod feet and warm clothing, they were quickly well again, and Rachel could see once more the pretty blue eyes of the baby she had lost when her sin committed her to a jail. More than ever Rachel's life was bound up in her little girl. Week after week, month after month, glided by, almost unmarked, while she, and Sylvanus, and Mrs. Croft watched the growth of the child. It was a very quiet home, but it was like a Paradise to her; for no one fretted her, no one remembered her past life. Or if either the old man or his wife remembered it, neither of them spoke of it. When she herself looked back on the past as sometimes a suddenly awakened memory compelled her to do, she felt as if she were dwelling in quite another world. All was so tranquil and so simple about her; the daily work sufficient to occupy without oppressing her; the evening rest in the snow-white chamber where Sylvanus read aloud, or made her read to the listening mother in bed; the untroubled nights, with Rosy slumbering beside her; the unbroken but cheerful sameness, after the wild sin and sorrow of her former days; all made it to her like another world.

Mrs. Croft had not expected Rachel to settle down so quickly and so easily into this new life. She had looked to see her pine after the freedom and excitement she had once had, and she had dreaded lest she should some day break out of bounds and give way to old temptations, to her own grief and that of her husband. But Rachel had taken simply a simple belief. She believed, now she could trust in God's love, that he was at all times present with her and tenderly watching over her conduct. She no longer doubted this, or was afraid of that loving presence, and the desire for the old sinful pleasures, so grievous to him and so dangerous to herself, had passed away for ever. The thought of her old ignorance and guilt made her shudder as if she were looking back down some fathomless gulf, from which a father's hand had saved her. Rosy must never fall into that gulf, as she had fallen!

"Mother," said Rosy, one Sunday evening after she had said all her hymns to Sylvanus, who held her tenderly on his knee, "Mother, is father dead?"

Rachel started, and dropped the tray, which she was reaching down for tea. The color fled from her face, and her lips quivered. What could have put such a question into Rosy's head?

"They asked me at Sunday-school," went on